

# THE LABOUR ORGANISER

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## HINTS AND TIPS FOR ELECTION WORKERS

The respective advantages and drawbacks of wall boards or number sheets provide an everlasting subject for disagreement among election experts. There are many highly successful agents who adhere stoutly to the old-fashioned wall board on which a marked register is pasted, which "wall" board nevertheless is often used, not upon the wall, but flat upon a table. Other agents swear by numbers, and certainly can bring to the support of their advocacy evidence of a more scientific system and up-to-date device. The solution however, of the matter seems to lie with the extent to which one's workers have been trained in the use of this or that system. Wall boards are orthodox, and many election workers understand them. Numbers are probably more efficient, but the workers require to be trained in the use of them. It is sheer madness to place an up-to-date or modern system in the hands of men who do not understand it and whose confusion is apt to lead to loss of votes. Our advice is, where workers can be trained beforehand,—use numbers; where they have not been trained,—use the pasted register on the wall boards.

The principle involved in the last paragraph is one that recurs more than once in the course of an election campaign. While I am a profound believer in up-to-date modern organising methods and in scientific electioneering, I would not hesitate one instant to adopt the most primitive and elementary system if this system was one that was best understood by the workers available. Elasticity in electioneering methods is of supreme value. It is for this reason that one cannot lay down hard and fast rules, or a specific course of conduct that should be followed implicitly in every election. It follows that absence of preliminary training of the workers is

a handicap. At the least, election workers should be called together at different times for the purpose of discussing plans and methods. It is sheer childishness and consummate conceit on anyone's part to pretend that either they or the workers themselves know it all. Electioneering itself is a problem always changing, and one never ceases to learn.

Every electioneer knows the value of a good display of Party colours. These must, of course, be neither paid for nor given away, but constant reiteration amongst one's workers will lead to the display of colour becoming general amongst them and spreading as a habit to other supporters. There is simply nothing which tends so well to counteract the spectacular display by the enemy of motor cars on the polling day as an excellent display of Party favours on our side. This effect is not accomplished without a considerable example, and those in charge of an election should be ever vigilant in urging workers to fly the flag. The established and general Labour Party colours are red and gold, and these make an excellent and effective contrast which can be carried out to some extent in the printing. Many Parties are quite timorous and conservative in this matter. Black and white was used by one Party as its colours, the reason given being that the opposite side had adopted red! Black and white may be an excellent drink (I don't know!) but it is a woebegone Party colour, and the reason given was surely an admission of Party timorousness. In another case yellow and white has been the Labour Party colour, and a moment's thought or imagination of this on a woman's blouse will illustrate the hopelessness and ineffectiveness of such a combination. The fact that the Tories or Liberals may have adopted one of our own colours is no earthly reason

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why we should abandon the Party's historic claim to it. Directly we make it clear that we are going to have a particular colour, especially red, the other side will soon drop it. It is pitiable to see a local Party surrendering the international colours of the Labour movement at the initiative of some hole and corner local Tory Association.

Most electioneers will agree that in the past it is the bill-posters who have most often rooked the election agent. Bill-posters have of late years more than quadrupled their charges, and while no one in the Labour movement would desire but that this profession should be fairly paid and in a position to command respect, we are afraid that there are many bill-posters who do not quite understand that 20/- must be given in exchange for £1. In the writer's experience, it has been no uncommon thing to give out some one hundred posters and to find but eighty posted. The excuse given is that twenty have been kept back for later display or to replace damaged bills, but in practice, at least, 10 per cent. leakage in actual posted bills has taken place. This is not good enough. Bill-posters should be paid on the bills actually displayed, and the display should definitely be for a specific number of days. It is well to have this point clearly understood in any contract with the bill-poster, and to know quite definitely for what period bills are guaranteed display on the charge made. The best firms will nowadays give one a full list of posting stations. Local knowledge will often enable the agent to earmark certain stations for a good display, though in special cases an extra charge for extra display on certain hoardings may be reasonable. It is profitable to check and number the bills displayed and the time of some worker detailed off for this task is well spent. It goes without saying that the fixed charge for various classes of posters should be ascertained before hand.

The employment of boys as number-takers at polling stations is not a very inspiring thing. As a matter of fact if a general practice is carried out and

these boys are given some small remuneration for their services they are technically "messengers," and in the numbers we have seen them engaged in certain places they would hopelessly exceed the legal limit. It is a far better plan to utilise adults for this purpose and voluntary labour at that. Boy labour is altogether derogatory; many electors ignore them altogether, and they are also prone to error and "absence without leave." Since the object of the number-taker is primarily not to use influence on the voter but merely to secure his number, no objection can be raised to the interchange of numbers with the enemy, and a good deal more might be done in this direction. Opposition number-takers frequently oblige one another outside the polling stations, and we have seen the practice of single number-takers serving both Parties carried out with advantage.

In the course of every contest it happens that there is a tremendous amount of folding to be accomplished. In some contests this is carried to an excess, and paid labour has been employed in the task of folding and collating addresses and leaflets, and inserting in envelopes, with sometimes accompanying tasks of gumming, tucking, numbering, rubber-stamping, etc. A useful hint is to obtain printers' "table hands" for this task. The difference between an amateur worker and a person whose trade such matters belong to is extraordinary, and the professional will get through the work in double-quick time with practically no confusion or mistakes. In this matter it is also well to remember that women are much handier than men, and it certainly is more appropriate that if much of such work is to be done the women should be engaged in the shelter of the committee room rather than out on the knocker.

Where work of the above character is to be done in large quantities by voluntary workers the careful allotment of specialised tasks beforehand will save a tremendous amount of time and probably much confusion. In a recent instance I saw four workers sitting round a 3ft. 6in. square table



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each trying to fold three sets of leaflets and insert and tuck in the envelopes. The work accomplished was nothing like what could have been done by either two of them working on a better plan. In another instance the envelopes were dropped around a big table by a gentleman who headed a procession of other workers who followed him round the table, each dropping as he passed one of the various leaflets or matters that were to go in the envelopes. I am not sure what happened when a complete circle had been done, but I believe the tail of the procession whisked off the completed pile of papers, which were taken away to be tucked in while the business would begin all over again at the place it started. It seemed rather a head-achy job, and, what is more, we didn't win. Speed can only be obtained by specialising the operations. A worker should be engaged on one operation at a time. Thus if there are three sets of leaflets to insert these should all be folded first, one set at a time. The collating of the leaflets, i.e., putting the three leaflets together, should again be done in one operation, while the inserting of same in the envelopes is yet another operation to be gone through from start to finish. The final task is that of tucking in. The efficiency of this method may readily be tested over, say two hundred envelopes, and the secret lies in the speed which can be got up when one is engaged solely on a single operation.

Perhaps because of lack of opportunity, or whatever the reason may be, Labour electioneers have, nevertheless, a good deal to learn in the use of motors. In the first place, the canvass rarely gives as much information in this respect as canvasses conducted by the other side, and, therefore, the polling day committee room clerk is frequently hampered by having little information to go upon and little work to give a car during the day-time. Our own circumstances differ also from the enemy, for, except with a Saturday's poll, we have no great strength to fetch up in the day time. It cannot be too emphatically stated that the fetching up of one or two long-distance voters

is sheer futile and wasted use of the motor. However one may desire to accommodate the odd invalid or the single voter who has removed to a distance, the car so used is not doing its best to secure a victory, and were I possessed of a car it should not be used for any such purpose. The right use of a car involves the attachment to it, as feeders, of, say half-a-dozen, workers, who should be busy all the time helping the car to pull the voters from a particular area. A car running to and from a particular street to the polling station, time after time, will pull out of that street a far higher proportion of voters than could be obtained with more cars making single journeys. The car should not have an instant to wait on its return, and in practice its frequent journeys to and from the polling station should enable the journey to be speeded up to the minimum time involved, as any practical motorist will confirm. Further, the appearance of the car time after time polling in the one area awakens an interest in its movements, and finally the waverers are persuaded to take the plunge and vote. There is no better use for a car during the day time than to hand it over to the women workers, with, of course, the strict injunction that they must use it as indicated above, and not, of course, for joy rides, or the benefit of "can't votes" and distant voters. In the evening every possible car should be concentrated in the working-class strongholds. The object of electioneering is to get votes, and so the car should be where the votes are to be got in largest numbers. Street after street ought to be gone through, systematically, by bands of workers feeding the car, and in many areas it positively pays to go from house to house fetching up. The fact that an odd one or two enemy votes may be polled is quite over-balanced by the big additional vote that is obtained by these tactics. Those in control of cars should never forget that cars have their limitations and no owner or driver cares to overload. It is better to make two journeys. Time should also be thought of for replenishments and the driver's meals. Some little consideration in these directions go a long way

**HINTS AND TIPS—Continued**

to securing the willing service, which is inestimable on such occasions.

There is no question more often asked concerning canvassing than that of the beginner who enquires what to say at the door. To this question there is no easy answer. It all depends. Each canvasser will make his introduction as suits the circumstances, for even the manner in which a door is opened sometimes decides the mode of address! Set subjects and phrases are sheer hopeless. It is, however, a good tip always to speak on the assumption that your candidate is known to the elector and that the expectancy is that they are going to vote for him. If the elector does not happen to know your candidate there is a subtle sense of something lost, which is conveyed if the first suggestion is acted upon. In spite, perhaps, of antagonism, the elector will feel a desire to make up the deficiency and to, at any rate, see and hear the candidate. Here the canvasser has merely to make good his opportunity by conveying an invitation to the next meeting. The assumption that the elector is going to vote for your candidate is evidence of the canvasser's own belief in the invincibility of his own side, and this conviction is often quickly conveyed to the elector, and has a beneficial effect. Willy-nilly, people like a winner, and the first impression towards one is usually friendly. It does not matter much by what little art a person's mind is thrown open to conviction so long as the vote and conviction follow afterwards. Even the business man himself does not seek to do a deal till he has taken his victim out to dinner; so, too, the canvasser should seek to make his first impression as convincing and telling as possible. It should never be forgotten, however, that the object of the election canvass is primarily for the identification of "fors" who may be polled on polling day. It is not intended that time should be wasted in attempted doorstep conversions. The canvass, however, should be a feeder for the meetings and also a current through which literature and statements can be spread.

We are frequently asked whether we

favour collections at election meetings. We do. Nor do we believe that given the right atmosphere they are in any way prejudicial to the candidate's interests. Rather the reverse. It may be quite true that some few miserly individuals who expect the heavens to rain manna for them till the Millennium comes will stay away from the meetings or decide to vote against the candidate on principle. On the other hand, the person who has given something to the contest feels pledged to its successful issue, and the more persons there are on whose support the candidature is based, the greater will be the popular appeal and the certainty of success backed by enthusiastic workers. It is bad policy to train an electorate to expect that some big Trade Union will invariably foot all the bill. Some proportion ought, at any rate, to be found locally by the supporters. Everyone will not agree with this, but how shall we defend the practice in one constituency where it is an absolute necessity if in another we despise this aid because of more certain funds? At the recent Leicester by-election, where election meetings were notoriously poorly attended, and where depression is widespread, over £70 had been collected at election meetings up to two days before the poll, while, of course, subscription lists and so forth produced a goodly sum.

One may also mention two other lessons to be gained from Leicester. One of the most effective posters put out was a huge streamer in 2ft. block letters, "Vote for Banton." The poster was the most effective produced by either of the three candidates, and was printed by the printers of the "Labour Organiser," i.e., The Midland Branch of the National Labour Press, Albion Street, Leicester. Another useful device we noticed was that collectors at public meetings were distinguished by a red armband of some inch and half in width which buckled on the coat sleeve. This seems much preferable to the ordinary steward's boss. It is easily distinguishable, and on the whole such an armband would be more certain of return to the chief stewards at the conclusion of a meeting.



**HINTS AND TIPS—Continued**

It is sometimes difficult to bring home to ward and polling district officers the absolute importance of canvass returns being sent in daily to the central committee room, yet no information is so vital and imperative as this. Day by day the election agent should be able to tell from the returns exactly how the position is going on in every part of the arena. Even if no additional promises at all have been obtained since the previous day's return, that information should be definitely before him on a return, and he should be able to know accurately that in such and such an area or areas the returns are blank. Certain data and deductions are to be obtained by the election agent from the returns mentioned, and without them he positively cannot give that consideration as to how the fight is going on in various parts which is necessary if all effort is to be well-directed and co-ordinated. The attempt to cover up a bad night's return by sending in no report is the most culpable offence a ward or polling district official can be guilty of, and after one or two warnings the central officials should ruthlessly get rid of or supersede the officers in any district where the returns are not regularly sent in. It is from these returns that one develops the plan of campaign and issues instructions to the meetings' department, literature department, or other departments as occasion seems to demand. With the returns in hand concentration on weak points is possible, while demonstration or attack can be made at opportune moments, strength can be added where needed and dispirited workers encouraged if required. In short, the whole strategy of battle is dependent on the knowledge of how it fares, which knowledge is largely derived from the record from committee rooms. Day by day returns should be the unflinching and unbreakable rule.

There are two orthodoxies in electioneering which I would gladly consign to subterranean blazes and which prove a sore burden on candidates, without, I believe, corresponding return in votes. They are the election address and the poll card. Perhaps the time has not come yet when we

may dispense with these oppressive and heavy expenses, but signs are to be seen that the old stodgy election address has had its day, while the poll card itself has fallen from its past estate, and there are election agents who merely insert a numbered slip in another election communication or even use the covering envelope for giving the elector his registered number. This is not quite the emancipation that I would have, for I cannot see what earthly obligation there is on candidates to give the numbers which electors can easily obtain at the polling booth. The real value, of course, lies in the fact that electors would forget the numbers that are there given them, and the number-taker's work would be altogether upset, with consequent confusion in the polling day committee rooms. Perhaps some day we shall reach a stage when our doorstep and fetching-up organisation will be sufficiently developed to dispense with both poll card and number-taker, and to agree with the other side on the abolition of the card. Meantime let us proceed. The earlier the information is obtainable as to the situation of polling stations, the easier the task of issuing the polling card. To this end constant touch should be kept with the returning officer, who might sometimes be pressed to facilitate arrangements for the convenience of the agents. Poll cards are best completed by allowing the printer to make the necessary alterations of polling stations, and, of course, the fullest instruction should be given him for the numbering of the cards. If this system is acted on, the cards should be carefully checked when received from the printers, who should also have been instructed to print a few unnumbered cards of each district for use in the committee rooms on polling day. A good deal of shibboleth is unnecessarily printed on most poll cards. The illustration of a hand making the mark, or a block of the elector actually polling in a booth, is, however, an attraction, and one's object must be to secure that our card is the one that makes the best impression: Insist on clear numbering by the printer and on the polling station being quite prominent and in the most effective place on the card.

# FROWDE & Co.

Printers & Publishers  
242/244 Old Kent Rd.  
London, S.E.1.



April  
Three  
Nineteen  
Twenty-two

Mr. H. Drinkwater,  
The "Labour Organiser"  
Whittington,

Dear Mr. Drinkwater,

We have received so many replies to our Advertisement in your last issue that eventually we were unable to send out *complete* sets of the North Camberwell Parliamentary Election Literature.

We have, however, a limited number of the Address and Election News should any of your readers desire them. We have also a quantity of Literature used in the recent L.C.C. Elections. (7 of the successful candidates had printing from us).

Being desirous of rendering still better service to the Labour movement we cordially invite your readers opinions of our printed matter—especially the "Election" address.

With best wishes for the future success of the "Labour Organiser,"

We are,

Yours very sincerely,

FROWDE & CO.



## THE PRESS AND LABOUR

SOME PLANS FOR COMBATTING THE PRESS GANG.

By W. W. HENDERSON

(Secretary Labour Joint Publicity Department.)

The remarkable progress of the political Labour Movement has been made despite the fact that the Movement has never possessed, and does not yet possess, what may be called a Labour Press in contradistinction to what is known as the capitalist Press. Recent efforts to establish daily newspapers have not met with the success which they deserved. "The Daily Citizen" was launched prior to the war only to disappear after a short existence. "The Daily Herald," after a chequered career, still survives, but it is in distressed waters, and unless the Movement rallies to its support it may soon follow the "Daily Citizen" into the record of what was but is not.

It would be a grave mistake to assume that, because Labour has made headway in the past, despite the lack of Press and publicity media of its own, it can afford at this juncture in the history of the Movement to be indifferent to the need for a Labour Press. Taking newspapers as they exist to-day, they are in the main either violently hostile, or, when it suits them, friendly in a lukewarm manner. The formidable character of their power is to be appreciated from the fact that in addition to the London morning, evening and Sunday newspapers, the provincial morning and evening papers, there are over 2,000 local weekly newspapers. Hardly a score of this vast number of Press publications are definitely Labour.

The great bulk of these newspapers will be mobilised against Labour whenever the General Election takes place. Their aggregate circulations run to many million copies, one Sunday paper alone having a circulation of over 3,000,000 copies weekly; and it does not require much imagination to realise that they exercise a considerable political influence and are an important factor in forming public opinion. There is no need for us to over-emphasise the influence they exert in political affairs, but at the same time it would be unwise to pretend that it is a negligible factor. Our political opponents are constantly making use of these vehicles

of information, comment, and propaganda, and there is abundant evidence available which shows that at the present time they are being supplied with free cartoons and propaganda articles, leading articles, and news paragraphs, that appear to originate from political organisations such as the Coalition Liberal headquarters and bodies similar to the Federation of British Industries and the Coal Owners' Association.

It is therefore necessary that local Labour organisations should endeavour to find some means whereby to counteract or at least minimise the effects of this steady stream of anti-Labour propaganda. Even if we had an adequate service of national Labour newspapers, they would not be sufficient for our purpose. The local weekly papers wield a far greater political influence than the dailies, especially in rural areas where the weekly paper is practically the only source of information at the disposal of a vast number of working class households. Local organisations should seek to establish local weekly newspapers which are not solely or even mainly devoted to purely propaganda matter, but which contain as much local news of general interest as possible. The chief fault of attempts to establish Labour papers (so many of which have ended in disaster) lies in the belief that a paper, to be a Labour paper, must necessarily contain column after column of solid propaganda matter. What are really wanted are successful newspapers, that is to say, journals which give up their news columns to news, and whose propaganda will appear mainly though, not necessarily exclusively in, the editorial columns.

"The Labour Press Service," 4 pp. crown, printed on 2 pp. only with 2 pp. left blank for use by local organisations, affords a useful basis upon which local newspapers can be built up. Already several local Labour newspapers have been established and are now entirely produced and printed locally, which were started on the basis of "The Labour

Press Service." It is only necessary to mention a few Labour weeklies which have either sprung from "The Labour Press Service," or include its features. "Swansea Labour News" (weekly), "Bradford Pioneer" (weekly), "Bath Pioneer" (weekly), "North Staffs Labour News" (monthly), "West Cumberland Labour Gazette" (weekly), "Finchley and Friern Barnet Citizen" (monthly), "Middleton Divisional Labour News" (monthly), "Pontefract Citizen" (monthly), "Bury Pioneer" (monthly), "Leeds Citizen" (weekly), "York Forward" (monthly), "Accrington Labour News" (weekly), "West Lothian Labour News" (weekly), "Leicester Pioneer" (weekly), "Derbyshire Worker" (weekly), "Birmingham Town Crier" (weekly), "Merthyr Pioneer" (weekly).

These papers are not only useful as regular Labour publications, but they will be invaluable to candidates and local organisations when they are conducting local or Parliamentary elections. Detailed information regarding the scheme is obtainable from the Secretary, Labour Joint Publicity Department, 33 Eccleston Square, London, S.W.

During local elections, special Local Election issues have been prepared, and have proved useful to organisations responsible for candidates. At some of the Parliamentary by-elections, special editions have been used. If organisations desire it, arrangements will be made to extend and elaborate this scheme for use at the coming General Election, and local organisations which are not in a position to undertake the publication of their own local weeklies, will be free to take advantage of this special election scheme. Details of this scheme will be supplied on application.

Leaflets, pamphlets, posters, powder and shot in the form of a "Speakers' Handbook," notes, and other useful "aids" are in course of preparation. When the election comes, it will find Labour fully prepared and fully armed for the fray.

In addition "The Labour Magazine" (48 pp. crown quarto, price 6d.) will appear on May 1st. This monthly magazine, which is being published by the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party, jointly, will deal with trade union and political affairs, Labour in Parliament, Co-operation, Labour

Abroad, Industry, Women in the home and in the workshop, books, organisation notes, etc. Each issue will contain special illustrated articles by leaders of the Trade Union, Labour, and Co-operative movements at home and abroad. Agents and speakers (men and women) will find this magazine of considerable help. The first issue will contain special articles by Lord Haldane, Mr. Philip Snowden, Mrs. Bruce Glasier, Edo Finnman (Secretary of the International Federation of Trade Unions), Mr. Fred Bramley (Assistant Secretary of the Trades Union Congress General Council), Alderman Emil Davies, Mr. Arthur Pugh, and Mr. James Haslam (Co-operative Society), and others.

This new publication will incorporate "The Bulletin" (Labour Party) and "The Trade Union Review" (Trades Union Congress) and will be the most comprehensive journal of its kind in this country.

I have given just a bare outline of the general scheme which has been adopted with a view to enabling local organisations to make some attempt at counteracting the press influence that will have to be encountered during the election. It is not necessary to go into fuller details at the moment; but sufficient has been said to give agents and secretaries an idea of what will be at their disposal for general election purposes.

## TO SUNDRY CORRESPONDENTS

Our thanks are due to several correspondents who have sent us samples of literature, etc., for notice or review. These will be adequately dealt with in our next issue, when "The Labour Organiser" will resume its usual features.

We note that the Gainsborough Trades Council and Labour Party have now amalgamated, thus following the general trend of events throughout the country. The continuance of separate Trades Councils and Labour Parties is a definite source of weakness to Labour in the constituencies, and the sooner some of our more backward districts realise this the better it will be for unity and strength and the power of Labour at the Polls.



## THE BUSINESS SIDE OF ELECTIONEERING.

One of the essentials of successful electioneering is the realisation of the importance of business principles governing the conduct of the election. While no election agent can afford to neglect the human side of his machine, or fail to take the utmost advantage of human impulses that tend to a successful issue of the conflict, it is nevertheless essential that one should realise that the election machine is very similar to the edifice of a great business; and in so far as this can be run on sound and straight business lines so far do order and method triumph over mess and muddle. A good deal of the election agent's work is of a purely orthodox business character, but in all parts of the machine, even in the sphere of voluntary workers, business principles must be obeyed if all efforts are to dovetail into one another.

In the first place sound book-keeping is essential, and this is referred to in another part of this issue. The system may be all right, but there must be the will to carry it through, and the determination that every financial transaction shall be recorded and that nothing shall escape the books. Estimates should be obtained, as far as possible, for every single expense or order, and by looking slightly ahead this is possible in many matters where estimates are not ordinarily obtained.

It is a good plan to positively insist on invoices accompanying all goods, particularly printing. Printers are often neglectful or averse to carrying out this request, but it is a most reasonable requisition, and agents are well advised to withhold further orders until invoices are received for goods already delivered. We have rarely found this plan fail.

In the rush of an election it is quite possible for there to be serious shortages in goods supplied, particularly when printing is sent in "in supplies." Insist on delivery notes accompanying all deliveries of goods, and before passing goods into stock the delivery note should be checked and the quantity of goods or printing should be entered up.

In dealing with bill-posters a similar strict rule should be observed. Leaks occur when bill-posters are allowed

to receive supplies of posters direct from the printer, and it is preferable to have all goods received at the central committee rooms where they can be checked and entered. The bill-posters supplies may then be handed to him and signed for. One has thus a complete check against the bill-posters' accounts.

It goes without saying that all contracts for the hire of committee rooms should be in writing, and should definitely state whether or no the price to be paid includes firing, lighting, and heating. So, too, every appointment of a clerk or messenger should be in writing, when no possible dispute can arise as to what is due when the time for payment comes.

It is an excellent plan to print at the commencement of an election a sufficient supply of special receipt forms. Every receipt received for any payment whatsoever should be receipted on one of these forms. One frequently sees a collection of receipts of all sizes and shapes which have been given promiscuously on any scrap of paper to hand. This is a slovenly method, and it is found that frequently the wording of the receipt does not convey the proper particulars of the payment, and indeed, they are sometimes altogether misleading. The insistence on use of the recognised receipt form obviates this, and is further, a valuable aid to tidiness in presenting the final return to the Returning Officer when all the receipts that are to be filed are easily slipped into a covering envelope. No receipt should be passed which does not contain the fullest particulars of what the payment has been for.

All payments out of the election fund should be made by cheque. This does not actually mean that each recipient receives a cheque, or that petty cash payments are not made in cash. If, say, half a dozen clerks are due for wages, a cheque may be drawn by the election agent to self, and the counter-foil should bear the particulars of the payment. The same principle is adaptable where larger payments are involved, or where petty cash expenditure is concerned. Thus petty

cash may be paid £10 by cheque at the onset or a larger sum if thought desirable. As further cash is required, a cheque should be drawn for the exact amount that petty cash has spent which obviously leaves the same amount in the coffers of the petty cash clerk, as that which was given at the beginning. There is a great liability to mistakes if the election agent carries about with him wads of treasury notes or a pocket full of silver with which to pay odd accounts; what is more he runs a great risk of being short in his cash himself. It is of paramount importance that the election agent should so conduct the accounts as to inspire confidence in his own integrity, for no man is immune from the attentions of slanderers or the jealousies of little-minded people. If the cheque book system is adhered to there is a double check on the final balance, while in the event of some special scrutiny of the accounts occasioned either by a petition or an investigation of other kind, the election agent fares best whose obvious desire has throughout been to keep his books and pay his way in a fair and above-board manner.

It is not generally known that it is the custom among banks to run the election account without bank charges. The election agent should immediately bank the first sum of money he receives, and if it happens that he has made payments out of his own pocket prior to the receipt of the official funds, it is better not to deduct same but to pay in the full amount, drawing a cheque to himself for the amount due.

Coming to the broader side of business electioneering, the golden rule to be observed is—be businesslike. The election agent should set an example in being prompt and early to business, notwithstanding the strain of his nocturnal labours. His hours should be regular and there should be regarding him none of that querulous or exasperated questioning at odd times—Where on earth is so and so? The election agent only earns his fee if he is ever at the helm. Personally, I like my meals in the committee room, but I like the dinner time and the tea time all the same. By this compromise one can cease work and enjoy the fellowship and lighter side of the election for an hour or so, while still being in the place where workers

expect to find one. It is not good business to be always serious and always working, and if meals are taken on the premises it is the time to drop shop and gather round for lighter things.

There is a certain amount of disciplinarianism attaching to the business-side of electioneering. An election agent gives orders, and while he never gives them as a works' foreman issues his commands, it is nevertheless essential that instructions given are obeyed. The election agent who establishes authority in this direction stabilises the whole machine, for one cannot conduct elections on the "Go as you please" plan. The election agent must inspire trust and confidence and the example of a business man knowing his own mind, and carrying on the election efficiently is generally sufficient to inspire both. The same remarks apply to every other department of the election. Persons in charge must have their authority understood and recognised, and to the extent that this is done unobtrusively and without friction, may the election agent himself be judged as a master of tact.

There is one final tip in business electioneering; it is, keep a diary. The agent who uses a diary and uses it well, is miles in front of the man who tries to muddle through with only his memory to aid him as to the things to be done or the appointments he has made. The avoidance of clashes and forgotten interviews is in itself a justification of the diary. It helps the agent to be businesslike.

*What you save in Cash  
you lose in Efficiency  
unless all the officers of  
your Party get the*

**Labour Organiser**

Voters going to and returning from the poll in a county election are exempt from toll on turnpike roads situate within the county for which the election is held (3 Geo. IV., c 126, s. 32).—Parker's Election Agent and Returning Officer.



## ELECTION ACCOUNT KEEPING.

### A SIMPLE AND EFFICIENT SYSTEM EXPLAINED.

The devising of an adequate system of account keeping is one of the problems that frequently baffles the election agent. Under the necessity of finally presenting the account in a specified form, the ordinary commercial systems of book-keeping fail him; for while it is possible for him to confine himself to orthodox methods consisting of cash book, day book, journal and ledger, the combination of which, with double entry, would result in a water-tight system, and a final account after much labour, he is also under the necessity of desiring to ascertain frequently throughout the campaign precisely where he stands, both as regards cash spent and expenses incurred. To obtain a daily balance with orthodox book-keeping involving the balancing of a ledger every day is ordinarily out of the question, and the need of a special system has long been seen.

At least one of the orthodox Parties has given its agents a standard account book. An examination of this, however, reveals the fact that the agent's problems have been by no means solved by it, nor has any efficient system yet been made available as far as we have seen to the agents of other Parties.

The system which is here presented in the "Labour Organiser" affords the maximum of simplicity with the minimum of trouble, and any clerk with an elementary knowledge of book-keeping, and some little supervision, should be able to present, if using these books, an exact statement of how affairs stand every day. The system proposed has been subjected to test and found to fulfil all required of it. It consists of three books only, viz., the cash book, inward day book, and what is termed the outward day-book, though, properly speaking, the last two books are technically one, and if a long oblong book were used they may be kept on opposite pages. Another book is ordinarily necessary, viz., the petty cash book, which is, of course, of a subsidiary character, and may itself carry a further subsidiary book, viz., the postage book.

The advantage of the system proposed is that the books may be made up from stock rulings, loose sheets being obtained from any good stationer. A sufficient number of sheets for the purposes of the cash book and other books may be placed together and bound in one cover, the whole being thus in handy form. Covers are simply made by cutting an ordinary manilla board (obtainable for a few coppers) to the size required. We believe, however, that a stock book may shortly be produced embodying the rulings in this system, and this would be available for the use of all Labour agents.

### THE CASH BOOK.

In our examples, produced on another page, two forms of cash book are shown, one with, and the other without, a bank column. The form with the bank column is the one we recommend. It will be observed that the cash book carried a debtor side and a credit side, and all totals are to be found within the ruled-off columns on the left or right of the book. These parts, in fact, are the cash book proper, and the intermediate columns are an analysis of the cash expenditure in the form required for the election agent's return. The totals of these columns should exactly balance the net expenditure, and the total on each line should exactly tally with the total carried out into the column or columns on the extreme right.

It should be borne in mind that every item expended in the course of the election ultimately finds its way into the cash book, and this book, therefore, must of necessity be the one and only authority for making up the agent's return. When all the entries for the election are completed, it is in fact merely a matter of copying out the totals for the "summary of election expenses." For the benefit of those who are not familiar with the keeping of a bank column in a cash book we give certain examples of payments. It should be borne in mind that every payment into the bank is a receipt by "bank," and is, therefore, entered in the bank column in the receipt side,

while it also is a payment out of cash, and, therefore, shows a payment out of cash on the other side. Similarly, all sums drawn from the bank for cash show as paid from the bank in the payment column on the extreme right, and they are receipts by cash and would be entered on the receipt side in the cash column. All other payments, whether cash or cheque, appear in the payments column to which they respectively belong. This matter may be somewhat difficult to follow at first, but the problem has to be mastered, and the following is designed to help:

#### LIST OF TRANSACTIONS.

1. The agent receives £300 in cash from the candidate.
2. He pays to bank £300.
3. He draws £50 in cash from the bank for office use.
4. He pays J. Jones £1 5s. in cash in respect of the hire of committee room.
5. He pays F. Adams £37 in cheque in respect of election addresses.

To express the above transactions in book-keeping form we have to realise that the candidate's contribution of £300 was a receipt by cash, and is so entered. It then became a payment out of cash, and is so entered, and at the same time became a payment to the bank, and is so entered. The transaction concerning the £50 was a payment by the bank, and was a receipt by cash, and is so entered. A moment's consideration will show that the total receipts by cash to date were £350 and the total paid out of cash to date was the £300 paid to bank; so, too, the bank up to date has received £300 and paid £50. An examination of the entries in the cash book so far will show that this is precisely what appears. The payment to J. Jones of £1 5s. in cash is an expenditure in respect of the election expenses, and is entered in the appropriate analysis column, as well as in the outward cash column. Similarly, F. Adams received £37 by cheque for printing, which is entered in the outward bank column. Once again, if we totalled the inward cash column and outward cash column, the difference is precisely the cash we have in hand, while the difference between the two bank columns shows precisely the amount remaining in the bank. Some little practice and a little care

will make this method of entry, which is the best, quite simple to even the novice.

#### PETTY CASH BOOK.

It is usually desirable to keep another book for all trifling payments, and this book is of the ruling shown in the first example. Precisely the same method of entry is adopted. It is usual to start off by giving a sum to petty cash which so far as the main book is concerned is treated for the moment as cash in hand, though there is a more correct way of dealing with it. "Petty Cash" balances its books as required, and one pays over to it what has been spent and transfers the total entries under their respective heads to the main cash book.

#### DAY BOOK, INWARDS.

Unfortunately for the election agent, he is never able to get at his position by merely totalling his cash expenditure and his invoices for goods supplied. From the outset he has incurred expense in respect of which he gets no invoices, and while some of these un-invoiced items are ascertainable, others can only be estimated. A complication comes in because while he may have entered in his book an estimated amount, an invoice rendered later may correct what he has entered, and orthodox book-keeping doesn't readily provide for this. Again, while he may have estimated a stated amount as the cost of a particular clerk, when he pays his wages at the week-end his day book estimate is obviously reduced by the amount he has actually paid. It is not easy to devise a simple form of booking which shall avoid any alteration of figures and at the same time readily give the correct position.

In the system shown the inherent difficulty in the problem before us is got over by keeping the day book in ledger fashion, adding to it a Cr. portion, or another book (as one will), to be known as the outward day book. This portion is used to cancel out invoices or estimates that have been paid wholly or in part, and a moment's examination will show that this being so ultimately every single penny that one has entered in the day book as a liability, gets cancelled out on the other side, and at the end of the election the two sides (or the two books) balance one another. In fact, as



pointed out above, the cash book ultimately carries in it every vital transaction.

The following will illustrate the method of working:—

On 1st May a committee room is hired from J. Jones at 25s per week for three weeks. There is thus a liability for £3 15s. incurred, which it will be seen is so entered.

On the 2nd May, 37,000 election addresses are ordered at the estimated price of £40, which liability will be noted is duly entered.

Up to this point the total of the day book and of the cash book shows everything that has been spent, but on the 5th May J. Jones receives 25s. in cash (see cash book), which reduces the liability to him to £2 10s., and the printer receives £37 by cheque, in payment for the printing, which sum it will be noted is £3 below the estimate—of course, an unheard-of sort of thing, but please remember this is the beginning of the election, and sometimes a little sprat (but why say more?)

It will now be seen that the day book and cash book do *not* give the real position, and so the outward day book is used in the manner that is shown in the illustration. To get at the real position one has now to deduct the outward day book totals from the inward day book totals, *and the net outstanding liability under every head is shown at a glance.* This, added to the cash book totals already expended, shows the actual position. It remains only to be said that sometimes an item has been underestimated in the inward day book. When this is so, and is discovered, the difference in debit is made up by adding an entry with the balance.

### THE AGENT'S ESTIMATE.

No one will have confused the above question of estimates for expenses incurred with the agent's total estimate of what his election is going to cost him. In every election the course of the campaign compels the agent to revise his estimate in certain particulars, cutting down in one place and enlarging in another, and so forth. We have not thought fit to print any sample rulings of how these estimates may be entered with revisions, and compared with the total expenditure ascertained from time to time through the books above mentioned. In any standard

ruled book we should suggest the addition of a page with rulings for this purpose.

### LEDGER.

In spite of all that has been said there yet remains one practical difficulty. The agent must in his return of election expenses give the name and address of every person to whom payments are made, and these particulars must necessarily be entered under the heading in which the payment to them falls. To post every item of expenditure into a ledger finally analysing the payments is a very big task, so we advise agents to supplement the books above named by writing small individual record cards bearing the names of persons to whom cash is paid, with the amounts and dates. These should be indexed under the statutory headings, while alphabetical guide cards could be added in the unlikely event of there being an unwieldy number of cards under any particular head. The total of these cards would obviously correspond with the total in the book, and they form a ready guide for collecting receipts when the return has to be filed.

### AN IMPROVED RETURN FORM

On another page we reproduce a specimen of an improved Register Return Form. The principal alteration from the form commonly used is that it makes clearer that what is required is the *total* up to date in each column—not the figures for one day only. Experience has shown that committee-rooms with the old form return figures from which it is impossible sometimes to deduce whether they are one day's or the total work. Also, now that in Labour contests worked on up-to-date lines names of "fors" are sent to committee-rooms from the central, which have been extracted from workshop canvasses, collected at meetings, etc., it has been found that local committee-room men sometimes send in reports of the *canvass only* and thus don't show the full position. The alteration in the name of the form from Canvass Return Form to Register Return Form makes it clearer that what is wanted is the total of *all* ascertained votes, whether actually canvassed or obtained by supplementary campaigns.

*Reduced facsimiles, cross rules are omitted***CASH BOOK, or PETTY CASH**

Date	Particulars	Dr. Total Cash Received.	Cr. Candidate's Exs. by Agent	Agent's Fees	Sub- Agents	Polling Agents	Clerks	Mess-

**CASH BOOK**

Date	Particulars	Inward		Dr. Candidate's Exs.	Agent's Fees	Sub- Agents	Polling Agents	Clerks
		Dr. Cash	Cr. Bank					
1/5/22	Per Candidate ...	300	0	0				
1/5/22	To Bank ...		300	0	0			
3/5/22	Drawn from Bank ...	50	0	0				
5/5/22	J. Jones ... (Hire Committee Room)							
5/5/22	F. Adams ... (Election Addresses)							

**DAY BOOK**

Date	Particulars	Totals		Candidate's Exs. per Agent	Agent's Fee	Sub- Agents	Polling Agents	C
1/5/22	J. Jones, engaged Committee Room, 3 weeks at 25/- per week	3	15	0				
2/5/22	F. Adams, ordered 37,000 Election Addresses, estimate £40 ...	40	0	0				

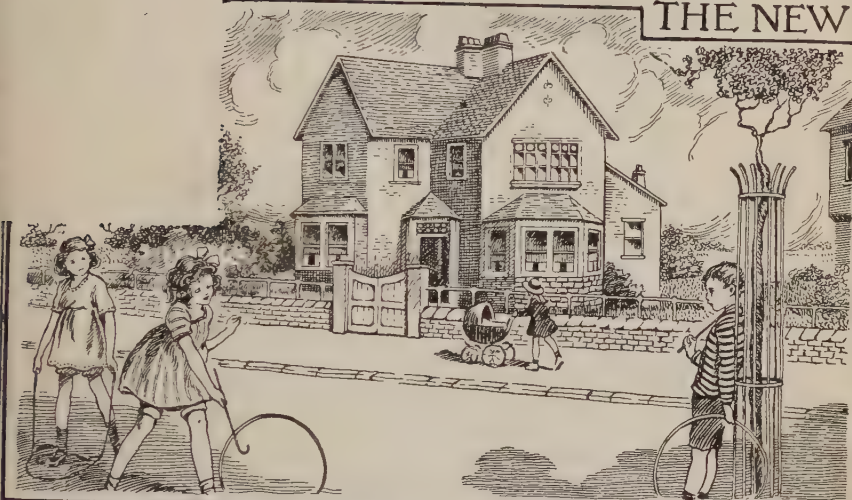
**DAY BOOK**

Date	Particulars	Totals		Candidate's Exs. per Agent	Agent's Fee	Sub- Agents	Polling Agents	C
5/5/22	J. Jones, paid portion of A/c ...							
5/5/22	F. Adams, over estimate ...							



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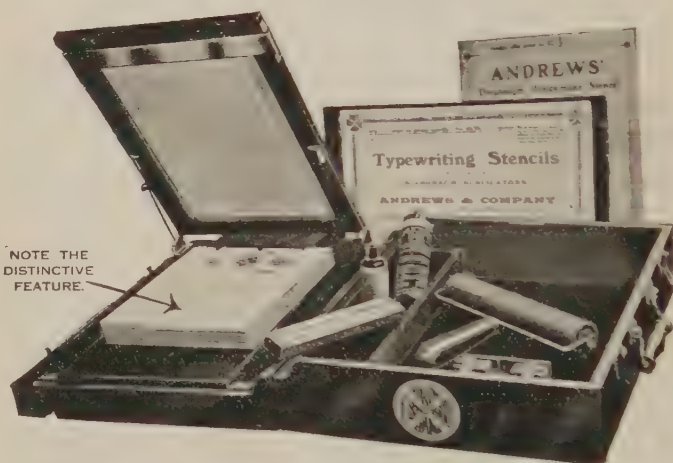
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	3 0 0						1 5 0	



## ORGANISING THE WOMEN ELECTORS—*Contd.*

BY DR. MARION PHILLIPS

*Chief Woman Officer of the Labour Party.*

### CAMPAIGN WORK.

When we turn to the work of the election campaign itself, the first point upon which stress should be laid is the vital importance of making women realise their great share in securing a victory. From start to finish every endeavour should be made to have at least one woman speaker at every public meeting held in support of the candidate, and there should always be women present on the platform. The fact that women have so recently become electors makes it necessary to devote special attention to them. Their knowledge of politics is not so general as that of the men voters, and by giving special attention to them the appeal to the women voters can be given particular point and her needs be especially emphasised. The general organisation of the campaign will, of course, be the same, for men and women electors but, in addition to that, there are some further proposals worthy of consideration directed to the women voters. In general literature such as special election newspapers some space should always be given to appeals to women, and in selecting leaflets, etc., her needs should be borne in mind. A personal letter from the candidate, or the candidate's wife, to the women electors is useful. The most important of all, however, are:—(1) A special canvass of women electors; (2) Women's meetings.

### SPECIAL CANVASS AND MASS CANVASSING.

1.—Special canvass of women electors. So soon as the campaign begins Labour women should be called to a workers' meeting, and at this meeting they should discuss carefully the special issues of the election and each be given a list of points for canvassers. They should be organised

into groups to undertake a woman's canvass, and in addition to the ordinary house to house canvass what we call "mass canvassing" is exceedingly effective. The scheme of this is that four or five women armed with women's leaflets bearing on the election and with their canvass books containing the names of the women electors, go to a special group of streets or courts. On arrival they visit each woman elector and tell her that in 20 minutes' time a meeting will take place lasting about 20 minutes. She will be duly warned of this meeting by the ringing of a bell and be able to go to it without having to dress for the occasion or to leave her home for any length of time. She is told the object of the meeting, namely, to put forward the reasons why she should support the Labour candidate and be given a leaflet or two with a few words explaining them. Having duly advertised the meeting, the bell is rung and there are two or three short speeches from the women dealing with Labour's policy. That is followed by discussion and questions amongst the women, and the workers armed with their canvass books enquire their views and enter any information they obtain. The audience is invited to come to the other meetings of the campaign, and it is found that where this system is energetically carried out the attendance of women at the big meetings shows a remarkable increase. Indeed, much of the success in getting the woman's vote at bye-elections has been due to this "mass canvassing." A variation of the same system is to have cottage meetings got together by the same simple method. It has the still further advantage that many women unaccustomed to public speaking find that they are quite able to undertake this and do it with signal success.

### INDOOR MEETINGS FOR WOMEN.

2.—Women's Meetings. It is well to have during the campaign some women's meetings held in the afternoon. This meets the requirements of a large number of women electors who have children that they cannot leave at night, and overcomes one of the difficulties always present in

working class districts, namely, that the husband is in the habit of going to the meetings and wife is not. One of the speakers at these meetings should always be the candidate, and, if possible, the chairman and one other speaker should be a woman.

### THE RIGHT SPIRIT.

In these notes it is not, of course, possible to suggest all that may be done in any particular constituency to ensure that the women's vote shall be a Labour vote. Every area has its individual peculiarities and advantages. It is the business of the organisers of the campaign to study these from the women's point of view. What is very encouraging is that wherever such propaganda is carried on continuously and energetically the result in votes is very marked. On the whole the working women have more influence with their sister working-women than anyone else, but many of the Labour men do splendid work amongst the women voters. In assisting these workers, whether men or women, to make the right approach to the women electors, it is useful to give to each one a copy of the "Labour Woman," which is full of information on women's questions.

In conclusion, I should like to state very definitely my conviction that the spirit in which the election is fought is of primary importance. The woman elector is the deciding factor for Labour. She should be made to feel from the very beginning that the Labour Party recognise her position and know her needs, and that on every side throughout the campaign women are given a prominent and honoured position. There is no greater error than to treat the wife as giving a vote automatically to whichever candidate her husband favours. The woman elector must be treated as a free individual responsible to herself alone for her decision and having special difficulties in her life for which Labour policy provides a remedy. She must be sought out with more care than the man, because she is still unused to being a citizen; but time, thought—and money—spent on political organisation amongst the women electors brings certain profit in votes, workers and enthusiasm.

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**THE PRINCIPLES OF LABOUR ORGANISATION** (*continued*), by the Editor, together with other useful articles and information.

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WHITTINGTON, NEAR WORCESTER.

*Editor-Manager, H. DRINKWATER*

The candidate's photo in the electors' windows is frequently a barometer which tells how the fight fares. A good display is an unfailing asset and has an excellent moral effect, while it is comparatively cheap to obtain. We do not think that the candidate's photo is best distributed through the medium of canvassers. Such a method is unreliable in practice though it may be perfect in theory, and every practical electioneer knows that quantities are left behind in canvassers' homes rather than that the inconvenience shall be suffered of taking out these awkward-sized cards every evening. The best method of distribution we have known is the employment of messengers, who will visit each elector's home with the request that they should accept the photo and place same in the window. The display procured by this method is wonderfully in advance of that of any other, while the wastage is considerably less, for in most cases the card is put in the window immediately the messenger has handed it in.

## POLLING OR PERSONATION AGENTS

The polling agent is a person whose principal function is to detect personation in the polling station, and the advisability of appointing any at all is a matter always demanding consideration. As a general rule polling agents are not necessary, and are ill-spared from the more strenuous work of hunting up votes on polling day. An even more important point is that the information required for their successful functioning is not always to hand.

If a polling agent is to be a success he must personally be a man of considerable tact and judgment. Local knowledge is almost essential, and he should furthermore be supplied with a marked register indicating completely the dead voters, persons whom the canvass has shown to be unable to vote, duplicates and so forth. This information must be reliable, for the polling agent who challenges voters accepts a great responsibility.

The polling agent may be appointed by the candidate or the agent, or the sub-agent, and must be appointed previous to the time fixed for the poll. An agent may be appointed to attend at each or any of the polling stations, and he must, of course, be sworn into secrecy. His appointment must be notified to the returning officer before he is able to act, but an appointment may actually be notified even while the poll is proceeding, for there is no provision that the appointment must be notified before the commencement of the poll.

The number of paid polling agents is limited to one polling agent for each polling station, but there is no limit to the number that may be appointed to work gratuitously. It is possible to appoint polling agents who may work in relays at a poll station, but not more than one of these officers must be paid.

The following extract from Parker's "Election Agent and Returning Officer" further outlines the polling agent's duties and obligations:—

"(a) To prevent any person, other than the real person on the register, from voting by himself or by proxy, and any person from voting, by himself or by proxy, a second time.

"(b) To keep, upon his copy of the register, a correct record of the voters who have polled.

"(c) To take an exact note of any irregularity, or of anything unusual occurring in the station.

"(d) To be present at the marking by the presiding officer of the votes of blind, physically incapable, Jewish, and illiterate voters.

"He is entitled to require the statutory questions or oath to be put to any voter and to cause to be arrested any voter whom he may declare, and undertake to prove, to have been guilty of personation.

"The polling agent is bound to maintain and to aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting; he is prohibited, under penalty of imprisonment, from communicating, except for some legal purpose, any information as to persons who have, or who have not, applied for a ballot paper, or voted, or for whom any voter has voted, from interfering with any voter when marking his vote, and from attempting to obtain information as to how a voter has voted, or is about to vote, or as to the number on the back of any ballot paper. He is bound to obey the lawful orders of the presiding officer, and is removable from the polling station for misconduct, and if so removed shall not, without permission of the presiding officer, be allowed to re-enter the polling station. It is the duty of the returning and presiding officers to see that the polling agent does not take advantage of his position to violate the law; there is nothing prohibiting the polling agent from marking his register in any way he sees fit, but the presiding officer may, if it is submitted, prohibit the polling agent from taking his marked register out of the polling station before the poll has closed. The polling agent is entitled to be present at the marking by the presiding officer of the votes of blind, physically incapable, or illiterate voters, and of Jews on Saturdays, but the presiding officer is not bound to wait until the polling agent, if absent at the time, is again present."

As a final conclusion it is important that polling agents should never be lightly appointed, but the fullest consideration should be given as to the advisability and attendant risk of their appointment. An admirable form of instruction is to be found in Parker's "Election Agent and Returning Officer," page 803, in which many points concerning a polling agent's appointment is further elaborated.



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### THE APPOINTMENT OF SUB-AGENTS

The appointment of sub-agents is perhaps one of the most difficult things to generalise upon that arises in the course of an election contest. As will be well known to our readers, their appointment is only possible in County Divisions, and no corresponding office exists in regard to Borough Elections.

It may be desirable in the first place to lay down the general conditions which apply to sub-agents. In Counties, and in Ridings, parts, or divisions of Counties, the election agent (not the candidate) may appoint one paid deputy or sub-agent to act within each polling district. These appointments should in all cases, if made, be completed at least one clear day before the polling, as the election agent is required to declare in writing to the returning officer the name and address of each sub-agent at least one clear day before the poll. The form of notification is officially prescribed in pursuance of Section 25 of the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Prevention Act, 1883, and the proper form is included in the election parcel published by the Labour Party. Sub-section 2 of Section 25 of the above-named Act is of great importance in this respect, and reads as follows:—

“As regards matters in a polling district the election agent may act by the sub-agent for that district, and anything done for the purposes of this Act by or to the sub-agent in his district, shall be deemed to be done by or to the election agent, and any act or default of a sub-agent which, if he were the election agent, would be an illegal practice or other offence against this Act, shall be an illegal practice and offence against this Act committed by the sub-agent, and the sub-agent shall be liable to punishment accordingly; and the candidate shall suffer the like incapacity as if the said act or default had been the act or default of the election agent.”

It should be remembered that the appointment of a sub-agent is not vacated by the election agent who appointed him ceasing to be an election agent, but an appointment may nevertheless be revoked either by the election agent who appointed the sub-agent or by his successor.

A sub-agent is required in precisely the same way as an election agent to

possess an office or place within his district or within any county of a city or town adjoining thereto, to which all claims, notices, writs, summonses, and documents may be sent. A sub-agent may be either paid or unpaid, and there is nothing to prevent the sub-agent being appointed for more than one polling district, and indeed, such is ordinarily the custom. The authority of the sub-agent does not extend beyond his district, and in this regard the importance of Sub-section 2, as above quoted, must again be noted. A sub-agent is required to take the declaration of secrecy before the opening of the poll. His duties are within his own district similar to the duties of the election agent himself, and it is rarely possible to entirely dispense with the sub-agent's services as is done with other employees on the close of the poll, for the sub-agent is required to close the accounts in his district, and in most cases some little delay in termination of services is thereby inevitable.

From the above brief statement of the powers and duties of a sub-agent, it will be seen that this officer is virtually (and, in fact, he is so referred to in the Act) the deputy of the election agent, and that his powers are *ipso jure* as large as the election agent within the boundaries of his own district. He is nevertheless a subordinate of the election agent, who, as will have been seen, may cancel his appointment at any time, and whose supreme powers are not abdicated even within the district to which a sub-agent is appointed by any such appointment made. It has been inferred therefore, that the powers of a sub-agent may be curtailed by the terms of his appointment, and in practice there is no question as to the advisability of this being done, assuming one is satisfied that the appointment is necessary or desirable.

In the opinion of the writer the advisability of the appointment of any sub-agents at all, requires careful consideration, and under no circumstances should an appointment be made unless it is impracticable to carry on the work efficiently by the aid of workers classified as clerks. The existence of sub-agents vastly widens the area of possibilities which may void the election, while in practice the risk of overlapping, or even of getting to cross purposes, is often considerable.



It may be said outright that there will probably not be a constituency in the country in which a sub-agent should be appointed to the full extent allowed by law, viz:—One sub-agent for every polling district, though with the grouping of polling districts it may, of course, be possible to have every polling district under some sub-agent or another.

Constituencies differ widely in their geographical details and this consideration enters very largely into the question of appointments, assuming the principle has first been decided in their favour. Cases of an even distribution of population throughout the whole constituency are comparatively rare, and the more usual thing is to find two or three, possibly more centres of population added to wide agricultural areas. In many cases the existing organisation in the centres of population has grown up on a somewhat clannish basis, and there is little outlook on other parts of the Division. It is such places as these that present the strongest claims for the appointment of a sub-agent, though even in such cases an officer with a status of clerk and a more limited responsibility, could fill the bill. Other instances occur of detached portions of a constituency which are particularly difficult of management from a centre. Train communication, and in some cases, road transit, presents extraordinary difficulties, and in such cases there is rarely any feeling of communion with the rest of the constituency. The question does immediately arise whether this is a condition of affairs which can be got over by surmounting the difficulties, or whether the undesirable state of isolation, inevitably resulting in a low poll, should be left without permanent attempt at remedy. To cut off any portion of a Division and leave it to its own resources, even under the control of a sub-agent, is not likely to lead to a good poll, and the side will succeed best which succeeds in creating a oneness of feeling throughout the Division, and in surmounting the obstacles of communication.

Other considerations which enter into the appointment of sub-agents are the difficulties of them actually functioning as such, owing to the absence of certain trades and facilities in or near their area. Thus if no printer is to be found in a given area it seems futile to appoint an officer with the power or

obligation of giving out printing when this matter could be better and more cheaply attended to from the centre. So to with bill posting. If a constituency is covered from a certain centre and no local bill poster exists, the sub-agent again is thrown back upon the central organisation. In many counties, too, the schools are best engaged at a particular centre, and here again the sub-agent is unable to exercise efficiently the powers of an election agent in his circumscribed area. These are but instances of practical difficulties that arise if one is to attempt to conduct an election with the authority of the election agent deputed to a number of persons with varying facilities at their command. The appointment of staff presents yet another difficulty, for the sub-agent has not got in view the whole question of the total expense in the same way as the election agent, who sleeps with this problem ever on his pillow. There is a tendency to look at the maximum expense allowed per elector, and to expect to be able to spend it, and the sub-agent fails to realise how the central expenses thrown over the whole Division materially brings down what it is practicable to spend through local officers in a particular area.

A further consideration bearing on the appointment of sub-agents, is the question of knowledge and experience. It is quite conceivable that many election agents in charge of a contest for the first time, will themselves be deficient in the legal knowledge necessary to perform all their functions with exactitude and discretion. If this problem is to be multiplied by the wide appointment of sub-agents with similar, if localised, powers, some danger inevitably arises. It is possible for the Labour Party, through its district officers, and other resources, to give constant guidance and advice during the contest to its less skilled agents, and this unquestionably will be done. The election agent, be he never so skilled, who does not rely upon these services at a time of doubt and difficulty may be running a very grave risk. On the other hand it is not possible to extend this service to hundreds of sub-agents, and considerable time may be lost if appeals are first made through the post to the election agent, and questions have then to be passed on from him to other quarters.

## CANVASSING UP-TO-DATE

THE BEST USE OF LABOUR'S  
OWN MATERIAL.

BY THE EDITOR.

*The following article is reprinted from the first edition of the "Labour Organiser," and in view of its importance at the present juncture, we venture to reproduce same for the benefit of the 2,000 new readers who were not subscribers to the "Labour Organiser" at the time that this article was published. We would point out that the form reproduced at the foot of the article is in no sense final or intended to be other than an illustration of the manner in which the course suggested may be put into practice. The Labour Party card and other stock cards may be readily adapted to provide for the same information being recorded.*

I have been many times asked what system of canvassing I believe in. Do I favour the single card system, or the family card, or a canvass book, or a cut-up register, or even any canvass at all? To all these I return the invariable reply that I believe in canvassing, and the single card at that, but that canvassing, like organisation generally, is poor sport if neglected till the election comes along. Canvassing, as such, makes its enemies and brings its disappointments, because it is almost invariably begun as a final disagreeable necessity, because the workers themselves have not been "broken in," and because the work of preparation—which would have given the workers training and courage, has been neglected till too late.

It is not the purpose of this article to discuss the ethics of canvassing. That we shall do another time, when we will also examine certain specialised canvasses which bring good results.

The object of this article is to question the basis on which almost all election canvasses have been conducted, and to inquire whether the old method inherited from the older political parties, suits the need of Labour's distinctive organisation. An examination of all our methods is, in fact, desirable from time to time by way of ascertaining what adaptations are necessary to changing Party circumstances or composition, or even

of altered psychology—for the latter is by no means a constant quantity.

In the methods of organisation which I advocate the fundamental thought is a realisation of the special circumstances and potentialities of the existing organisations of workers by hand and by brain; and this grappling with our problem as a distinctive one favours the introduction of specialised methods that produce results impossible to the Liberal or Tory organisation. For instance, a workshop canvass is essentially a Labour luxury. So also are various other plans for securing the greatest value out of industrial machinery which will be illustrated from time to time in "The Labour Organiser" along with the orthodoxies which they supplement but do not supersede.

I strongly advocate the most earnest endeavours to compile a Trade Union register, and a Co-op. register, too. This information should be transferred to the marked register, along with the markings for known sympathisers, workers, etc. Quite positively, the existence of a marked register in a constituency to-day consisting only of the transferred marks of "fors" from the last canvass ought not to be tolerated. It is hopelessly insufficient for our opportunities. The organised workers, whether by hand or brain, are the great potentiality of the Labour Party. There is no gainsaying this—it must be accepted as an axiom in Labour's political organisation. Either the Labour Party has a special claim and a special appeal to this great section, or the Party is misnamed. Are we, then, to be so foolish as to confine ourselves to collecting our known votes only, and neglect the opportunities of knowing and influencing our greatest potentiality, with its possibility of special appeals and special means of compassing it? I trow not.

All this has great bearing on the thesis for this article. The basis of almost all canvasses is that the worker goes out with blank cards unarmed as to the inclinations of the voters, and (under the best system practised) his results are checked with existing records, variations being checked by a second canvass or special visits. I say unhesitatingly that where the method of Labour organisation indicated in the paragraphs above has been adopted, and records completed, the old

canvassing method is no longer suited to Labour needs, and that the visitors (I prefer that word to canvassers) should be armed with the information as to our potentialities. In other words, the cards, before they go out, should be marked to show the Trade Unionists, Co-operators, party members, etc.

It is instructive to note the origin of the present system. It is copied from the orthodox parties, and prior to the strengthened hold over Trade Union membership which has distinguished our Party growth during the last few years, it undoubtedly suited the then stage of development. But the increased and increasing amenability of the Trade Union and Co-operative vote has altered all that, and to deprive our election visitors of such special opportunities as they have with these electors is to forego a part of our armoury. Though special strata of the electorate have at various times been largely the property of this or that Party, at no period has so large or distinguishable a section of voters been within the reversion of any Party as that which attaches the workers' vote to the Labour Party. The "raw" canvass has therefore been compulsorily the method of the orthodox parties, for although they compiled records of "for" or "against," etc., nobody would be so silly as to mark one's canvass cards with this information for issue to the

workers. Probably no body of workers that ever existed could be trusted to perform a complete and honest canvass if the whole of the records were already in its hands. And it must be made clear that my advocacy is for the distinguishing of "potentials" only, as mentioned above, and this method is *not* applicable except where the records of these are fairly complete.

The study of electioneering methods embraces not alone an appreciation of the psychology of the voter, but that of the helper, too. Imagine the spirit and encouragement given to the visitor when he discovers that in his street of 75 houses given him to canvass, some 30 to 50 are Trade Union homes, that some are Co-ops, and others maybe active Party people. He knows that a good vote is there, that friends are there, that welcomes in many places will be sure. He will most certainly more surely discover fresh helpers. He can make more direct appeals in all those marked houses, he can get hints and information to help him with the others, he can obtain better results in the window display he is attempting, his literature can be specialised to better effect for the individual voter, in short, in every way his prospects are improved and the canvass is bettered.

Finally, here is the new form of card I advise where this system is adopted. I have frankly dropped the word "canvass."

*The Labour Party Visitation Card.*

Polling Dist.....Ward.  
Reg. No.....  
Address.....

Labour Organisations	Name	For	Agst.	Doubtful	Remarks
If T. Unionist....					
Co-op. ....					
Ind. Member ....					
Also .....					

NOTE.—Short lists of prevalent Unions may be made, and printed on back, using numbers on this side to save writing. Instructions to Canvassers should provide that where there is more than one opponent the "Remarks" column should be used to classify as far as possible the "against."



## THE PROGRESS-TALLY

By W. STEWART RAINBIRD.

(Agent, East Ham, North Division.)

Mr. Inner Self and Mr. Anxious Candidate seem to join voices on polling day to discomfit the Agent in the question, "How are we going on now?" Well—with what *can* one cheer or placate them both?"

Whether there is any means of knowing will depend on whether there is data upon which knowledge may be built. Exact knowledge cannot be expected; on the other hand, surmise merely misleads and exasperates. Is there not in the known number of electors who have polled, and the known number of promises which have polled, the requisite data? Would not a side by side and hourly comparison of the one, the "All Poll," with the other, "Our Poll," give a reasonable approximation to a knowledge of events? It is true the human factor disturbs both of the sources of information, as it does in most things mortal, but at the least, is not our approximation an alternative to guesswork coloured by the temperament of the agent?

The Progress-Tally is a simple, semi-automatic device which compares the Our Poll with the All Poll at any given moment. A convenient form consists of a 4to large post Paris or Bristol board, ruled centrally. The left hand side is headed "Lists . . . All Poll," the right, "Our Poll . . . Cards." Each side is ruled in squares, numbered from 5 in multiples of 5 to 50 along the top, and in fifties from 5 down the left hand side (i.e., 5, 55, 65, etc.). A "Time-total" column is ruled each side the central dividing line, and subdivided into hours and half-hours from 8 a.m., and each column refers to the side which is contiguous. An intelligent boy or girl can work the device, thus—Count 5 numbers on a checker's list, tick the fifth and tally one in the first square numbered 5 on the All Poll side: Count promise-cards after they have been extracted as having been polled into fives and tally one for each 5 on the "Our Poll" side. Enter up totals in the time columns at times marked thereon.

It should be noted here that the calculation of the actual poll is not the

objective of the device; the count will reveal that soon enough! What is aimed at is to keep track of the rise and fall of our poll in relation to the anti-poll—to keep one's fingers, as it were, on the pulse of the electorate, so that weaknesses may be detected and what remedy there is applied.

To get at the significance of the figures yielded by the tally, the errors arising from the human factor must be to some extent, at least, corrected. The reliability of the checker's list is minimised by two things—(1) the duplication of numbers thereon, and (2) the refusal of some few electors to give numbers, but both may be minimised, the former by an instruction to the marker to strike out duplicate numbers when marking-off polled numbers, the latter by a request to checkers to mark each refusal with a cipher, so that the passage of a secretive elector is noted. Again, the value of promises polled as an index to "Our Poll" is discounted by (1) the degree of unreliability of promises in a given area; (2) the fact that the extraction of promise-cards always lags behind the recorded poll.

In connection with (1) it may be of interest to state that the reliability of promises in relation to actual poll appears to vary according to the character of the ward. Thus, in mainly middle-class areas reliability may be as high as 80 per cent., in artisan class districts 52 per cent., and in less literate, or slummy, areas it may fall as low as 40 per cent. Careful tests made by the writer in three borough constituencies appear to support these percentages. The reliability of promises which have polled in relation to the actual poll appears to be higher. The same tests appear to indicate that a deduction of 10 to 20 per cent. must be made from the "Our Poll" figures on the Progress-Tally, always bearing in mind that where large numbers of electors have been un-canvassed the deduction will be less, and, further, that in correction of (2) above the deduction may always be lessened by 2 per cent.

The Progress-Tally in Central Office is of the familiar square-paper graph pattern: totals for each ward are recorded and transferred to a final graph representing the constituency as a whole.

## THE RETURN OF ELECTION EXPENSES

The duties of a Parliamentary election agent by no means end with the closing of the poll. As a matter of fact his status as election agent remains and his duties are not completed until the final declaration concerning election expenses has been filed with the returning officer. Certain definite statutory dates are laid down for the performance of certain functions during the intervening period. On no account must these dates or time limits be extended, and recent experience would show that there is even greater danger to the election agent if he is neglectful on these matters, than if he has contravened the law in some other particular during the course of the election! Anyway, the agent's post-polling duties are of an onerous kind and under no circumstances can be avoided. In the following table of dates it is to be observed that in each case the number of days is calculated from the date of the declaration. This, of course, is usually one day later in County constituencies than in Boroughs:—

(1) Within 14 days after the day on which the candidates returned are declared elected (i.e., 15th day counting the day of declaration as one), every claim against the candidate or election agent must have been sent in. Claims received after this day are statute-barred and must not be paid except by leave of the Court. It is advisable immediately after the declaration to advertise for claims giving notice that same cannot be paid after the date specified. Note that these claims include the candidate's declaration of his amount of personal expenses. The agent's fee if unpaid should also be rendered to himself in account form.

(2) Within 28 days after the day on which the candidates returned are declared elected (i.e., 29th day counting the day of declaration as one), all claims, liability for which is admitted, must be paid, and under no circumstances can any money afterwards be paid in respect of these claims. In respect to claims of which the amount is in dispute a competent court may order payment later of such sum as may be adjudicated upon. These dis-

puted claims are separately entered on the return of election expenses mentioned below. The sum which really ranks as expended, in reference to the limit allowed by law, is that sum which is actually paid either within the 28 days or by order of the court at some later day. It should be noted that any penalty for excess payment or any opportunity of the opposing Party to petition is not avoided by delay in court procedure over a disputed claim, as a provision exists whereby liability in these matters is re-opened should the court give judgment involving payment.

(3) Within 35 days after the day on which the candidates returned are declared elected (i.e., 36th day counting the day of declaration as one), the election agent must transmit to the returning officer his return of election expenses in the prescribed form, together with his declaration concerning same, also in the prescribed form. The actual forms are included in the election parcel issued by the Labour Party and are fairly simple. They closely follow the outline given in our article last month in the estimate for election expenses. Strict attention must be paid to the point that every item expended must be put down as paid to the person who actually received the sum. Particulars of the payment are required. Thus it is not sufficient to merely say printing £....., cab hire £....., bill distribution £.....; the particulars of goods supplied or services rendered, together with the dates, must be given. Cab hire would obviously be either an amount paid direct to a jobbing master or paid to some worker as a refund of cab hire expended by him, and in such cases it does not follow that one has to take the name of every taxi driver one employs, for obviously the payment in such circumstances is really a payment of the expenses of a particular officer and not a direct employment or payment to a taxi driver. All receipts over £2 must be filed with the election returns, and to avoid a good deal of unnecessary writing on the return it is advisable to attach also the invoices, when, instead of giving the particulars of every item, one may say "as per particulars on invoice herewith." In such case the invoices become actually a part of the return.

(4) Within 42 days (43rd day) of the



contest the candidate must file with the returning officer a declaration very similar to the agent's in regard to the accuracy of the return. As this declaration could not be given unless the agent has afforded facilities for the examination of the return, it is obvious that a certain responsibility is also involved. It is a good practice to submit the actual return to the candidate before filing same, and then to file the return and both the candidate's and agent's declarations at the same time, i.e., within 35 days. It should be remarked that procedure has been laid down by which an agent failing to make his return in time may be brought to book. A false declaration involves the penalty of a corrupt practice. The candidate who is his own agent has the same liability to make the return as his agent would have, but he is relieved from making the agent's declaration and makes only the candidate's declaration. It should be noted that the returning officer "is no judge of the sufficiency of the return or declarations, and is not required to criticise or scrutinise them in any way." The returning officer must publish a summary of the election expenses within 10 days after the receipt of the return.

The returns and declarations are open to inspection during two years after their receipt on payment of a fee of 1s., while copies may be furnished at the prescribed price.

### PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION LAW AND PROCEDURE\*

Mr. George Horwill has rendered a signal service to his brother agents and to numerous other workers by his recent handbook entitled "Parliamentary Election Law and Procedure." This little booklet is not, and does not pretend to be, more than a brief summary of the matters dealt with. It is intended to be in no sense a legal text-book, or other than a handy guide-book to the novice, and memory jogger to the initiated. Yet in these particulars it fills a long-felt want. There are scores of men who have neither the inclination for deep study of these matters, or the time to read ponderous books, but who require, nevertheless, a

fairly reliable and brief summary of technical procedure and the elementary legal points. For such as these, Mr. Horwill's publication is intended, and it will fill the bill. The closely-printed pages contain ten chapters and a useful appendix, together with a characteristic introduction by Josiah Wedgwood, M.P. In the first edition before us we notice one or two minor omissions and corrections that are necessary, which will doubtless be altered in a revised edition. Nevertheless, there is no loss of all-round reliability, and at one shilling this is the cheapest publication on the subject

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